

Concerned Citizens of Historic Glastonbury
P.O. Box 423
South Glastonbury, CT 06073

March 1, 2010

State of Connecticut General Assembly
Environment Committee

Re: SB-206AAC Local Use Agencies and the Siting of Telecommunication Towers

My name is Tally W. Noble and I speak to you as a board member of Concerned Citizens of Historic Glastonbury. CCOHG is a group of over 200 residents in Glastonbury, formed in July 2009, who are vehemently opposed to the construction of a 110' (recently reduced by the potential applicant to 98') telecommunication tower proposed by Verizon/Cellco, Inc. on Main St. in historic South Glastonbury, CT.

We support SB206 to return local control to municipalities on cell tower sitings. Local control needs to be fully returned to municipalities who best know their town's needs and, in particular, sensitive development issues.

The purpose of zoning regulations for most states is to protect the health, safety, well-being and property values of a community. For too long, the power to do so with regard to cell tower sitings has been severely diminished and dismissed at the local level. The CSC says it takes into consideration towns and communities input but the fact of the matter is that almost **every** application that is put forth to the CSC gets approved. Mind you, many have minor modifications made to them but they still are built nonetheless. Alternative solutions, while better for the community but more costly to the companies, are also almost never implemented. This shows that the advantage sits very firmly and squarely with the telecom industry.

Instead, companies have gotten more brazen and arrogant in their feverish buildout race for bragging rights regarding "the most 4g coverage". Make no mistake, this is no longer about necessary infrastructure development but the almighty dollar. It has become an issue where if they find someone willing to lease land to them, they'll find the "need". The telecom industry has enormous influence that it wields in every step of the process. Citizens are blindsided time and time again when we discover we cannot utilize our own towns zoning regulations and cannot discuss health or property values concerns no matter the validity of these issues. Under local jurisdiction, these sensitive zoning issues would be at the forefront.

As it stands now with the CSC, it would be as if you were involved in any other legal proceeding except this time the panel of judges is being paid by your opponents and you are unfamiliar with the process yet that's what your opponent's business is. The timeline they gave you did not allow for sufficient preparation (shot clock ruling), and when you get up to plead your case, the judge silences you on all your rebuttals (health, property values, environmental impact, proximity to schools and historic districts). The only thing they'll consider is if you were able to find your opponent a better site and if it is impacted by any historic properties (and even this protection has been eroded and chipped away by mitigated towers). How in any way is this fair, impartial and unbiased? The balance of fairness and equality must be addressed! It is not in the CSC's framework to advocate for townspeople. This leaves us vulnerable to well financed companies - to swoop in and take advantage of the system.

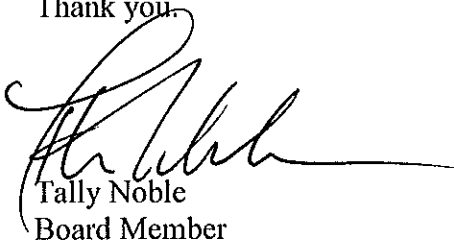
That a town, knowing the complexities of its' own community best, does not decide where cell towers go or if their community truly needs them is an extremely ineffective way to proceed. Give them credit - towns are used to making hard decisions but at least these decisions come with the overall towns best interests at heart.

If municipalities and its citizens were able to have their own input in the earliest stages, and have it weigh in with the greatest merit, communities and its taxpaying residents would be afforded protection of their basic rights. Just as a property owner must get required permits from the town before building (i.e.: sheds, additions, decks) so should it be with potential cell tower leasors/leasees. No town would approve of commercial development on an AA residential zoned piece of property. Would you buy your home knowing a 110' cell tower would be built adjacent to your property? The process, as it stands now, is extremely costly, time consuming and stressful to whomever chooses to fight the placement of a tower. Many thousands of dollars are spent even before the application is put forth. Pick any town in CT and you'll find identical complaints by townspeople who feel like insignificant collateral damage.

The CSC does not do enough to say flat out **NO** to the industry. Why should they? They are being funded by the telecom companies. Local control must be put back as a means of protecting citizen's fundamental rights. When did it get to be a given that each and every tower is needed just because the company that is erecting it says so? Why are the voices of entire communities gagged when it is finally their turn to provide input? What protection are we afforded **anywhere** in the process? If we don't have the power to go after attorney's fees if an application is denied what can possibly dissuade the telecom company from filing an application? They know they hold all the cards and have even said so in town meetings. It's become a "**fill in the blank name of town**" process for them with no real repercussions or consequences. They do not have to be held accountable. The financial hardships and undue stress are placed once again on citizens with no choice but to take on a fight that wasn't of their own choosing in the first place.

Please approve SB 206's return of local control to land use agencies with regard to telecommunications towers where it rightfully belongs. Please take into consideration the countless citizens of Connecticut that have been affected by this frustrating, overwhelming and distressing process.

Thank you.



Tally Noble

Board Member

Concerned Citizens of Historic Glastonbury